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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
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FACT SHEET ON UTILITY BEEF

Background:

Beef cattle have steadily increased in numbers ever since the war started, and more beef will be marketed this fall than ever before. However, because of war demands for corn and shortage of other grain feeds, many cattle which in normal years would go into feed lots to be fed grain for several months are being sent directly to market from pastures and ranges. This means that while there'll be some good and commercial beef coming to market, more beef will grade Utility or Canner and Cutter than we've been used to having in the past. Over half the beef slaughtered at federally inspected plants grading commercial or better is going to the Armed Services. Civilian consumers throughout the nation will find more utility grade beef on the market.

In the Southern Region, however, approximately 75 percent of the beef in retail markets normally grades utility. This year, not many cattle here have been fattened on grain feeds. Little grain-fed beef can be imported from other parts of the country. Few grain-fed live cattle will be brought into the region. Consequently, many people who are accustomed to finding some Choice, Good and Commercial grades of beef in their stores will not be able to get the upper grades this year.

The Problem:

Since civilian consumers have more money to spend, the demand for the upper grades of beef will be great. The supply of lower grades will be larger than ever before. It will be difficult to store much of the beef because of the lack of freezer space. Overabundances of lower grades of beef may develop.

The Solution:

To keep the lower grades of beef moving from the farm through the market to the table, consumer demand must be kept up. The marketing season has already started in this region and is expected to reach its peak during September and extend on through October. Information on the advantages of lower grades of beef and on the best ways to prepare it should be put within the consumer's reach constantly during this period.

Advantages of Utility Beef:

The major difference between utility grade beef and the upper grades is in the amount of fat running through it. Utility grade beef contains about 15 percent separable fat, while Choice beef is almost a third separable fat.

As for separable lean, utility beef has about 64 percent separable lean, which is over 10 percent more than in Choice grade meat. So utility beef provides us with more lean and less fat than the upper grades.

If there is any nutritional difference between the upper and lower grades of beef, utility beef contains more food value than Choice grade. Both provide protein, needed to build and maintain body tissues, in the same proportion. Both are excellent sources of the B vitamins, thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin. Fresh beef contains some vitamin C and vitamin A. Studies show that grass fed beef is a good source of vitamin A, even better than grain-fed beef. All beef supplies us with minerals, especially iron, which is essential to building blood.

Utility beef is point free. It costs less than the upper grades.

Preparing Utility Beef:

Utility beef is not always as tender as the higher grades, but it is not necessarily tough. Much depends on how the meat is prepared. Home economists tell us that utility beef is best when cooked in moisture a long time over a slow fire. It lends itself to pot roasts, stews, braised dishes and ground-beef dishes better than to oven roasts or broiled steaks.

Publications Available:

"Meat for Thrifty Meals"...Farmers' Bulletin No. 1908, U. S. Department of Agriculture. "Seeking Beef According to the Cut"...U.S.D.A. Leaflet No. 17.

